

I. INTRODUCTION

The field office carries out for an assigned circuit (1) the original inspection and weighing of grain under the U.S. Grain Standards Act of 1976, (2) the permissive inspection, weighing, and checkloading of rice, pulses, processed grain products, and other assigned commodities under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended, and (3) the supervision of these activities conducted by licensed inspectors and weighers.

The incumbent performs training assignments in sampling, inspection, grading, and/or weighing of grain in preparation for higher level duties and responsibilities.

II. MAJOR DUTIES

The work is performed at an agency field office and at various locations within the area served by the field office. Work assignments are rotated between shifts and points of inspection within the area serviced. Also, assignments may be performed in other field offices, which involves details and/or reassignment to a different geographical area involving commodities or market services differing from the original field office.

The incumbent is responsible for transportation to and from assigned points of inspection and may be required to operate a motor vehicle on official business.

The work involves on-the-job training assignments in one or more of the following inspection functions and/or weighing activities:

A. Grain Sampling and Grading

Studies and reviews official standards, regulations, manuals, and other instructional materials governing the sampling, inspection, and grading of grain, processed grain products, and miscellaneous agricultural commodities.

Receives on-the-job training in the drawing of representative samples from lots of grain in boxcars, elevator trucks, warehouses, and boats or barges. Inspects for general condition bulk and sacked lots of grain being unloaded, loaded, or stored in elevators, trucks, freight cars, export vessels, barges, or warehouses, and obtains correct and representative samples of grain. Examines the lot by observation, touch, and smell for lack of uniformity in quality and condition, such as heating, dampness, weevily, smutiness, mustiness, and for the presence of excess foreign material. If uneven loading is evident, segregates interior portions for review by supervisor and encloses representative portions in waterproof or airtight containers. Records on standard forms information as to kind, quality, and condition percentage of interior portions of grain, identity of cars, seals, location, date, and other pertinent information.

Receives on-the-job instructions in the interpretation and application of official grade standards and regulations governing inspection and certification. Under close guidance, performs both mechanical measurement and visual inspections to establish the type and quality of the grain and related commodities. The physical analysis of sample portions of standardized products includes determining grading factors such as: kind, class, subclass, damaged, heat damage, foreign material, smut, insect infestation, odor, moisture, protein content, texture, milling degree, color, and other grading factors applicable to a particular grain or commodity. In addition, may perform chemical and physical tests (such as aflatoxin, NIR protein, etc.) whenever applicable. Subject to a close over-the-shoulder review by a senior grader, applies the official standard to determine the grade of the product.

Under supervision, reviews the sampling of grain by licensed samplers to ascertain if methods employed are in accordance with requirements.

Assists in conducting stowage examinations on shipholds, barges, hopper cars, and other containers to insure cleanliness and acceptability of storage and handling facilities.

Receives instructions and assignments in the checktesting of equipment and diverter samplers used for official inspection.

B. Inspection of Processed Commodities

After receiving on-the-job training in commodity inspection, the employee samples, checkweighs, and checkloads processed products such as flour, cake mix, corn meal, vegetable oils, and other processed products. Inspects nonfood components (containers, strapping, pallets, etc.) for these products to insure that they meet applicable specifications; interprets and utilizes the various Federal, Military, and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) specifications; employs sampling tables and selective rates; and performs plant sanitation, land carrier, and shiphold examinations. Prepares written reports of findings for use by supervisors.

C. Equipment Checktesting

Assists senior graders in inspection and checktesting equipment and diverter samplers used for official inspection.

D. Weighing

The incumbent may be required to perform either or both of the following weighing functions: (a) official weighing (class x), either at export or interior locations; (b) supervision of weighing (classes x or y) by any delegated export state or designated agency.

The employee receives on-the-job training at various weighing stations (rail car, truck, barge, or ship) within a grain elevator, performing duties such as: checking and recording weighing activities to insure that all grain received by car, truck, or barge is removed and delivered to the scale without waste or loss and that all outgoing grain is delivered to the ships or other conveyance for which it is intended, and that all conveyances are clean, properly filled or emptied, and that seals are correctly attached. Reviews weighing activities of elevator employees and takes corrective action to change faulty procedures, improper techniques, or failure to follow required instructions or procedures. Reports malfunctioning equipment to elevator personnel and follows up to be sure that repairs are completed. If corrective action cannot be taken or controversial situations are encountered, immediately contacts supervisor for assistance.

Under close supervision, the incumbent may approve and sign official weight certificates for grain weighed in and out of the elevator. This requires verification and recording on the certificates of weights taken from weight tickets or tapes, carrier identifications, type of movement, kind of grain, date, location, and any pertinent information relating to special conditions observed or noted. Incumbent is also responsible for weighing records and reports required by the weighing certification program in the elevator.

Under state or agency delegation or agency designation, reviews and validates the conformance of the weighing to federal standards.

III. FACTORS

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position Level 1-4, 550 points

Familiarity with the principles, methods, official grade standards, and regulations applied in grain inspections. Fundamental knowledge of the characteristics and common defects of wheat, rice, other grains, or grain products being graded. Knowledge of the production, weighing, processing, storage, and transportation conditions and practices that directly affect product acceptability or grade of grain, pulses, or grain products being graded.

The ability to learn the official grain standards and regulations and to learn the specific grading and inspection procedures.

The ability to develop skill in sampling, performing mechanical determinations, and applying grading procedures and techniques.

Knowledge the official grain weighing process and familiarity with the grain flow systems and elevator grain movement capabilities at each grain elevator assigned.

Knowledge of the basic operational workings of grain weighing devices and ability to detect operational malfunctions which could affect the accuracy of the weights are required at locations where weighing is performed under the Grain Standards Act.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls Level 2-1, 25 points

The employee works under the immediate supervision of a higher level grader, who provides detailed and specific instructions on the methods to be used in performing each phase of the work.

The trainee works in strict adherence to the instructions given. Assistance is readily available while the work is being performed, and the employee may consult the senior grader or supervisor to clarify original instructions, solve problems which are new or unusual to the employee, or provide interpretation of the standards.

The work is closely reviewed, being checked while in progress and upon completion for adherence to prescribed methods and procedures, for technical proficiency, and for the accuracy of any determinations.

Factor 3. Guidelines Level 3-1, 25 points

Written guidelines include inspection and weighing manuals and handbooks, official standards, and AMS/FGIS instruction. Instructional material including interpretive slides and samples are available for reference.

The trainee is provided with specific guidelines prior to each phase of the work.

The employee adheres closely to the guidelines and instructions. Situations not directly covered by the guides and/or borderline cases are referred to a senior grader.

Factor 4. Complexity Level 4-2, 75 points

Assignments deal with a small variety (i.e., one or two types) of grains and related commodities (e.g., wheat, corn, soybeans, rice, etc.), scales and scale types (e.g., manual and electronic hopper scales, and manual and electronic platform scales, etc.) and vary according to the nature of the assignment (e.g., sampling, original grading, original weighing, technical oversight of nonfederal inspectors, weighers, etc.). The volume and speed of the loading operation (e.g., involving ocean vessels being loaded for export) requires timely and accurate grading and weighing determinations.

The employee selects appropriate methods depending on the nature of each assignment, considering the type of grain or grain product in the case of grading, or considering the configuration of the elevator or facility and type of equipment in the case of weighing, or processed products inspection.

Various grade factors and/or contract specifications must be analyzed to make grade determinations, and a limited variety of processing or storage processes must be analyzed to inspect processed products of conduct or oversee weighing operations.

Factor 5. Scope and Effect Level 5-2, 75 points

The work consists of performing specific procedures in obtaining representative samples and determining the quantity, general condition, and the U.S. grade of grain and commodities. The work affects the accuracy and reliability of the final determinations and certificates issued by the Agency. Since grain is traded on the basis of U.S. grades, weights, and export contracts, the grader's work affects the financial interests of buyers, sellers, shippers, warehouses, and others having an economic interest in the product.

Factor 6. Personal Contacts Level 6-2, 25

In addition to contacts with other Agency employees, the work includes relationships with employees of grain elevators, shippers, licensed inspection agencies, sampling contractors, and similar firms operating in the marketing chain.

Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts Level 7-2, 50 points

The contacts with the elevator employees are for the purpose of coordinating sampling or grading work. Problems or controversies are referred to the supervisor for resolution. Contacts with FGIS employees are for the purpose of receiving work assignments and instructions.

Factor 8. Physical Demands Level 8-3, 50 points

Phases of the work require considerable physical exertion. Obtaining samples involves climbing onto trucks, barges, hopper cars, man lifts, etc.; using probes, pelicans, and similar devices; and moving and lifting grain bags or sacks weighing up to 55 pounds. Stowage inspections involve climbing into and out of shipholds.

Factor 9. Work Environment Level 9-3, 50 points

The work involves regular and recurring work in grain elevators subject to potentially explosive concentrations of grain dust, in rice mills, processed product plants, rail yards, dock loading and unloading facilities, and various warehouses. Works at extreme heights in grain elevators and aboard ships. Must continuously take extensive safety precautions to avoid serious accidents resulting from these hazards. Some work is performed outdoors under varying weather conditions.